

# PME

PHARMACEUTICAL MARKET EUROPE

Harnessing creativity in a digital age –  
maximising its impact in healthcare

Sustainability in pharma – the  
challenges facing the industry today



## Striving for innovation in oncology

GSK's Jack Harris  
on what drives him to  
improve patient care





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# Striving for innovation in oncology

Our cover story this month features Jack Harris, Vice President of Oncology at GSK. I sat down to talk to Jack about his career and what drives him to improve patient care. So many of us have had personal experience of a cancer diagnosis, through family or friends, or personal journeys, and Jack is no different. In the interview, Jack talks about how focused he is on bringing new cancer treatments to patients and how, when the opportunity came up to work at GSK, he felt that the company shared a lot of his own personal values.

Jack says: "I want to work for a company that cares about very similar things that I do, that really focuses on being ambitious for patients and how we can drive improvements in patient outcomes. And how we can do that while also collaborating with external partners, healthcare providers and healthcare systems. Because I'm a big believer that no one company, no one person, can do this alone." Read more on page 16.

Danny Buckland's article this month looks at creativity in healthcare and how to maximise its impact by embracing challenge and disruption to energise creative campaigns. As he says: "Pharma campaigns are scoring huge successes at a slew of design and creativity awards, but combining insights, data and measurements will unleash greater

potential for transformative campaigns that address growing issues in healthcare in Europe and globally." Turn to page 28 to find out more.

Our June issue has a focus on sustainability in pharma and in our Q&A with Claire Knapp, CEO of Havas Lynx, she talks to *PME* about why the path to sustainability in healthcare is fraught with significant challenges and highlights the need for more patient-focused education. Take a look on page 22.

We are delighted to be hosting the **Communiqué Awards** again this year, proudly supported by Inizio. Join us on 4 July in London for an exciting night where we reveal the winners and celebrate all the entrants for their innovative and creative work!

**Looking ahead, our July/August issue will focus on achieving comms excellence.** If you would like to make your voice heard on this topic, please get in touch at [sales@pmlive.com](mailto:sales@pmlive.com)

I hope you enjoy the issue!



Iona

Iona Everson  
Group Managing Editor

# JUNE 2024

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# Key sustainability trends and challenges facing pharmaceutical companies

Looking at the opportunities and benefits of implementing sustainable procurement practices

By Gerdi Strydom



**I**n today's healthcare market, pharmaceutical companies are expected to demonstrate a commitment to sustainability throughout their operations. Patients, healthcare providers (HCPs) and policymakers are increasingly considering sustainability factors when making purchasing decisions, with many expecting companies to align their practices with environmental and social objectives.

The rising significance of sustainability in healthcare necessitates procurement professionals' awareness of their suppliers' environmental practices. Additionally, they need to be able to assess the sustainability of various goods and services. By doing so, they can make informed decisions that support their sustainability goals while meeting their customers' needs.

There is an increasing focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria in procurement practices across the EU. The integration of ESG criteria involves assessing technologies' environmental footprint, considering their potential contribution to sustainability, and aligning with the EU's commitment to carbon neutrality and the World Health Organization's call for sustainable healthcare practices.

By embracing this holistic approach, the EU is leading the way in ensuring that environmental sustainability is considered alongside efficacy, safety and cost-effectiveness, ultimately promoting the development of healthcare technologies that contribute to both human health and environmental well-being.

## The European healthcare procurement landscape

The healthcare procurement landscape in Europe varies from country to country, each characterised by its unique set of regulations. Despite this diversity, some common trends can be observed.

Many European countries are centralising healthcare procurement, either at the national or regional level. Although this approach can enhance efficiency and cost-effectiveness, it may also disadvantage small and medium-sized enterprises in competing for contracts.

Moreover, there is a noticeable increase in transparency within healthcare procurement across Europe, driven by factors such as increased data availability and patient activism.

## 'The EU is leading the way in ensuring that environmental sustainability is considered alongside efficacy, safety and cost-effectiveness'

This trend is likely to continue as patients become more engaged in their healthcare decisions and demand greater accountability from healthcare providers and suppliers. One prominent trend is the increasing governmental focus on sustainable procurement. In the EU, sustainability initiatives and regulations that significantly influence healthcare procurement include:

- The European Green Deal: mandates considering sustainability in public procurement
- The Circular Economy Action Plan: encourages environmental considerations in purchasing decisions
- The Medical Devices Regulation: requires manufacturers to disclose environmental impacts.

Governments across Europe are setting ambitious targets and implementing policies to promote sustainability in the healthcare sector.

This shift is fuelled by growing concerns about the environmental impact of healthcare activities and the imperative to reduce costs.

Regulatory changes are also underway to reduce the environmental footprint of pharmaceutical products. The authorities responsible for these changes are implementing new regulations requiring pharmaceutical companies to report their environmental performance and take measures to reduce emissions.

Navigating these changes presents challenges for pharmaceutical companies. The pharmaceutical supply chain is inherently complex, involving multiple stakeholders and varying sustainability standards across different markets and geographies. This complexity makes it challenging for pharmaceutical companies to implement sustainable procurement practices across their entire supply chain and all applicable regions. Additionally, sustainability standards vary across different markets, which can make it difficult for pharmaceutical companies to follow all relevant regulations.

## The rising tide of sustainability

Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities for companies that embrace sustainable procurement practices:

- Long-term cost reductions: sustainable procurement practices can reduce costs in the longer term through energy efficiency and waste reduction
- Enhanced reputation among stakeholders: pharmaceutical companies that implement sustainable procurement practices can enhance their reputation among stakeholders, including patients, healthcare providers and investors
- Innovation in sustainable products and services: sustainable procurement can



drive innovation in environmentally friendly products and services. This can lead to new market opportunities for pharmaceutical companies

- **Competitive advantage for sustainability leaders:** pharmaceutical companies that are leaders in sustainability can gain a competitive advantage over their rivals, with sustainability becoming increasingly important to patients, healthcare providers and investors. Prioritising sustainability also attracts environmentally conscious consumers, helping companies gain a competitive edge and expand their market share
- **Regulatory compliance:** adhering to sustainability regulations and policies ensures compliance with environmental standards, mitigating legal risks and promoting ethical business practices
- **Access to markets:** healthcare systems increasingly prefer suppliers that meet sustainability criteria, making sustainability a prerequisite for accessing key markets and securing partnerships.

### The future of sustainable procurement

Building upon the trends highlighted earlier, pharmaceutical companies are presented with a unique opportunity to harness sustainability initiatives to propel their growth and enhance their market position. To harness this growth potential, pharmaceutical companies can adopt the following strategic recommendations:

#### 1. Enhancing value creation and differentiation

A strategic approach to sustainability is paramount for pharmaceutical companies seeking to thrive in an increasingly environmentally conscious marketplace. By embedding sustainability principles into their core business strategies, companies can align their objectives with societal and environmental imperatives while simultaneously driving value creation and differentiation. Setting clear sustainability goals, establishing measurable metrics and making greener decisions are essential steps in this strategic journey.

#### 2. Investment in innovation

Innovation is central to sustainable growth. Allocating resources to invest in data and analytics capabilities enables effective tracking of sustainability performance. This promotes using data-driven insights to measure progress, identify areas for improvement and make informed decisions about sustainability strategies. Pharmaceutical companies are encouraged to invest in research and development efforts aimed at fostering innovation in environmentally friendly products and processes. Exploring alternative materials, sustainable packaging solutions and eco-friendly manufacturing practices not only reduces environmental impact but also opens doors to new market opportunities and enhances competitive advantage.

#### 3. Stakeholder engagement and transparency

Engagement and transparency are foundational elements of sustainable business practices. By fostering meaningful dialogue with stakeholders, including patients, healthcare providers, regulators and investors, pharmaceutical companies can build trust, credibility and goodwill. Transparent communication about sustainability initiatives, progress and performance metrics demonstrates accountability and reinforces the company's commitment to responsible business practices.

#### 4. Monitor regulatory changes

Navigating the complex landscape of sustainability regulations and standards requires diligence and foresight. Pharmaceutical companies must remain vigilant in ensuring compliance with evolving environmental regulations at both regional and global levels. By staying informed, conducting regular audits and implementing robust governance mechanisms, companies can mitigate legal risks and uphold ethical business conduct.

#### 5. Engage with suppliers

Proactively engaging with stakeholders across the supply chain is essential to developing sustainable solutions. This includes sharing best practices, setting joint targets and providing support to suppliers investing in sustainability initiatives. Fostering collaborative relationships can drive positive change and create shared value across the entire ecosystem.

#### 6. Collaborate with industry peers

Collaboration with industry peers can lead to collectively addressing common sustainability challenges through sharing knowledge, exchanging best practices and developing joint solutions. Engaging in industry forums, consortia and initiatives to drive progress propels the industry towards sustainable procurement goals.

By leveraging these recommendations, companies can not only mitigate risks and capture opportunities but also contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future for the pharmaceutical industry and society as a whole.

### Embracing sustainability in the pharmaceutical industry

The pharmaceutical industry stands at a pivotal juncture, where integrating sustainability principles into business strategies offers unparalleled opportunities to drive innovation, enhance competitiveness and foster long-term growth. Sustainability has become a strategic imperative for pharmaceutical companies aiming to thrive in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Through strategic alignment with sustainability goals, proactive engagement with stakeholders and steadfast regulatory compliance, companies can mitigate risks and enhance their reputation and competitiveness.

Embracing sustainability as a fundamental aspect of company operations not only drives economic value but also contributes to a healthier, more sustainable future for generations to come.

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**Gerdi Strydom** is Managing Director at Valid Insight, part of Bioscript Group



## SERVICEPLAN IN THE TOP 10 OF THE MOST CREATIVE HEALTHCARE AGENCIES WORLDWIDE

The magazine Advertising Health in New York, together with Clio Health, determined a global top 10 ranking of the most creative healthcare agencies. We are proud to be ranked at 10th place, and we would like to thank our amazing clients for travelling this path with us.

If you are also looking for excellent healthcare communication, please contact us: [serviceplan-health.com](https://serviceplan-health.com)